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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUDAPE 01485 060746Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 (ISO) W
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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 1485

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, HU
SUBJECT: APRIL 13 HSWP CC PLENUM

REF: STATE 091370

1. APPARENTLY WHAT TRIGGERED THE SERIES OF PERSONNEL CHANGES AT THE APRIL 13 HSWP CC PLENUM WAS THE RETIREMENT OF 66-YEAR OLD JOSZEF SANDOR AS DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUREAU. BAD HEALTH APPARENTLY WAS THE CAUSE OF HIS RETIREMENT. SANDOR, WHO WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE PARTY NEWLY CONSTITUTED AFTER 1956, RETAINS HIS SEAT ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. HIS REPLACEMENT, ISTVAN KATONA IS ALMOST 20 YEARS YOUNGER AND ONE OF THE RISING LIGHTS IN THE HSWP CONSTELLATION. HE HAS BEEN ILL RECENTLY, HOWEVER, AND HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ATTEND TOO ASSIDIOUSLY TO HIS DUTIES AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE PARTY PAPER NEPSZABADSAG. HE IS KNOWN TO BE A CLOSE ADVISOR TO KADAR AND APPARENTLY WILL ASSUME THAT ROLE FORMALLY NOW AS DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUREAU.

2. REPLACING KATONA AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF NEPSZABADSAG IS 69-YEAR OLD DESZO NEMES, THE OLDEST MEMBER OF THE HSWP POLITBURO AND FORMER RECTOR OF THE CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL. NEMES HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING A MOSCOW MAN, SECOND ONLY TO PULLAI IN THAT REGARD AMONG THE PARTY HIERARCHY. GIVEN KATONA'S REPUTATION AS A
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KADAR ADVISOR THE FIRST SECRETARY OF THE PARTY, SHREWDLY AS ALWAYS, APPARENTLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF SANDOR'S DESIRE TO RETIRE TO MOVE KATONA BACK TO PARTY MATTERS AT SAME TIME SHIFTING NEMES OVER TO BE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF NEPSZABADSAG. KADAR MAY HAVE PUT NEMES IN CHARGE OF THE PARTY ORGAN TO STIFLE CRITICISM FROM OTHER SOURCES OF THE CURRENT OFFICIAL PARTY LINE. WE DO NOT EXPECT, HOWEVER, ANY

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CHANGES IN THE PRESENT HSWP LINE, INCLUDING SUCH MATTERS AS EUROCOMMUNISM, RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND HUMAN RIGHTS. CERTAINLY, NO ONE CAN COMPLAIN WHEN A MAN KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE PARTY AS A "MOSCOW MAN" IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE PARTY PAPER.

3. PRIOR TO THE CC PLENUM WE HAD HEARD SEVERAL REPORTS THAT THERE WOULD BE SEVERAL PERSONNEL CHANGES, AMONG THEM ONE AFFECTING THE EDITORSHIP OF NEPSZABADSAG. ONE CANDIDATE REPORTEDLY IN LINE FOR THE JOB WAS PETER VARKONX, KADAR'S CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU AND KADAR'S PRESS ADVISOR. THIS DID NOT MATERIALIZE BUT WE BELIEVE THERE IS SOME BASIS FOR BELIEVING THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CANDIDATE UP TO THE LAST MINUTE. A YUGOSLAV SOURCE WHO FREQUENTLY VISITS THE HSWP CC HEADQUARTERS TELLS US THAT NO CC MEMBER KNEW WHEN HE ENTERED THE ROOM WHO WAS GOING TO BE THE NEPSZABADSAG EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, KADAR AND BISZKU APPARENTLY HAVING DECIDED TO KEEP THEIR CHOICE SECRET UP TO THE END.

4. WITH ONE MINOR EXCEPTION THERE IS NOTHING PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY IN THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE CC PLENUM. THE COMMUNIQUE DID MENTION, HOWEVER, THAT THE POLITBURO CALLED ON THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO DRAW UP A NEW APARTMENT-BUILDING PALN FOR 1976-1990 AND TO SUBMIT IT TO THE CC FOR APPROVAL. A YUGOSLAV EMBASSY SOURCE, WHO SAYS HE HEARD IT FROM "A MAN WHO WAS THERE." TELLS US THAT DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM KADAR ROSE TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE WISE TO PUT TOO MANY RESOURCES INTO THE APARTMENT-
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BUILDING PLAN. THE WAY THINGS MAY GO IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID, WE MAY HAVE TO PUT THOSE RESOURCES TO USE IN OTHER FIELDS. YUGOSLAV EMBASSY SOURCE INTERPRETED THIS REMARK TO MEAN THAT KADAR IS CONCERNED ABOUT HOW MUCH LONGER BREZHNEV WILL REMAIN AT THE HELM OF THE CPSU AND IN CHARACTERISTICLY CAUTIOUS FASHION WISHES NOT TO PROMISE TOO MUCH TO THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE WHEN HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DELIVER. THE FINAL PLAN ON HOUSING TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BY THE CC WILL, THEREFORE, NOT BE MADE PUBLIC.
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